

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 1-4, as follows. All claims in the application are being reproduced below in accordance with current U.S. Patent and Trademark Office requirements.

1. (Currently Amended) A sheet post-processing device, comprising:

conveying means for conveying a sheet;

intermediate stacking means having a pair of support members for supporting left and right edges of the sheet that is sent from the conveying means, the support members capable of moving toward and away from each other in a direction that intersects a sheet conveying direction so that the sheet is pressed against one of the support members that serves as a reference by the other support member to be positioned;

processing means for processing the sheet positioned by the intermediate stacking means; and

delivery and stacking means for receiving the sheet that is dropped through a gap created between inner edges of the pair of support members which are moved away from each other,

wherein the gap between the inner edges of the pair of support members in the direction that intersects the sheet conveying direction is narrower on a downstream side in the sheet conveying direction than on an upstream side in the sheet conveying direction when the support members are retracted apart from each other.

2. (Currently Amended) A sheet post-processing device according to claim 1, wherein the pair of support members each have a support portion for supporting the edge of the sheet,

wherein the support portion of the other support member is partially cut off on the upstream side in the sheet conveying direction to provide a remaining portion, and

wherein the remaining portion of the other support member makes the gap between the inner edges of the pair of the support members in the direction that intersects the sheet conveying direction narrower on the downstream side in the sheet conveying direction when the support members are retracted.

3. (Currently Amended) A sheet post-processing device according to claim 1, wherein, when the pair of support members are retracted, the other support member is tilted with respect to the one support member to narrow the gap between the inner edges of the pair of the support members in the direction that intersects the sheet conveying direction on the downstream side in the sheet conveying direction.

4. (Currently Amended) A sheet post-processing device according to claim 1, wherein, when the pair of support members are retracted, the difference in the gap between the inner edges ~~the support portions~~ of the pair of support members, on the downstream side and the upstream side in the sheet conveying direction, is set approximately equal to a distance that the sheet conveyed from the conveying means travels to reach the one support member that serves as the reference.

5. (Original) A sheet post-processing device according to claim 2, wherein the remaining portion is provided in the other support member in a manner that allows the remaining portion to move toward and away from the one support member.

6. (Original) A sheet post-processing device according to claim 2, wherein the remaining portion has a triangular shape.

7. (Original) A sheet post-processing device according to claim 5, wherein the remaining portion is moved in accordance with the size of the sheet conveyed from the conveying means.

8. (Original) A sheet post-processing device according to claim 1, wherein the pair of support members position the sheet by making parallel motions to approach each other.

9. (Original) A sheet post-processing device according to claim 1, wherein downstream side ends in the sheet conveying direction of the pair of support members are on a higher plane than upstream side ends of the support members.

10. (Original) A sheet post-processing device according to claim 1, wherein the pair of support members are bent in the middle in the sheet conveying direction in a manner

that puts the downstream side ends of the support members on a higher plane than the upstream side ends of the support members.

11. (Original) An image forming apparatus, comprising:
an image formation unit for forming an image on a sheet; and
a sheet post-processing device for processing the sheet on which the image is formed by the image forming unit,
wherein the sheet post-processing device is a sheet post-processing device of any one of claims 1 through 10.